

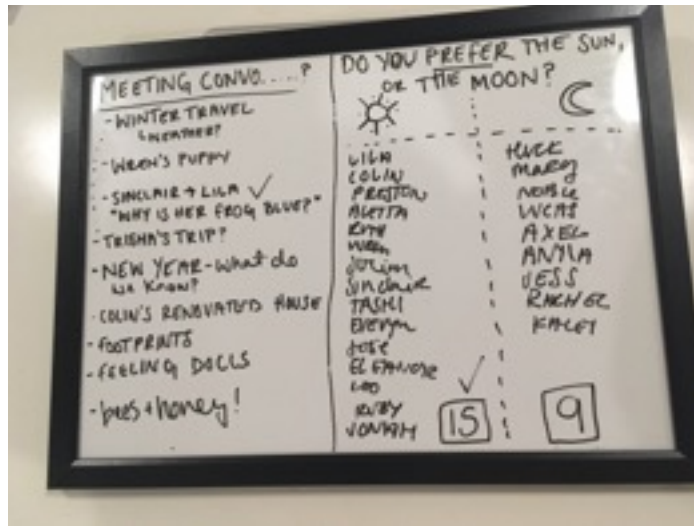
Participation - January 16th 2018

Viewing Morning Meeting is a sort of laboratory, a place of social exploration... How is it possible for 22 young children to be together? How is it possible for 22 very different young children, spanning the relatively distant space of several years, to be together? What parts of Meeting do we value; which parts of Meeting do we want to own? What do the children care about, what do the adults care about?

At this point in our research, I believe we are invested in participation.

Participation is key to citizenry & democracy. We believe participation is integral to the development of an *empathetic, open-minded society*. Coming together as 25 people aged 3 to (nearly) 27 years with diverse backgrounds, opinions, & feelings is a fertile opportunity to *practice togetherness*. To *LEARN* how to *LISTEN* rather than to learn how to wait your turn. To realize that others have vibrant inner lives colored by the differences in their external world. To learn how to acknowledge similarity & differences with respect. To connect. Deep learning requires vigilant practice in meaningful ways. This may sound lofty, but it's what we're doing at MM.

Last week Kalei began writing down potential MM conversation topics after so much change & novelty over Winter Break. Little things she heard children or families say, or things she was curious about. It's not a to-do list, just a point of reference for when we get a off-track or blank-minded at Meeting. "Would you like to have a conversation about ___?"



Voting on a Meeting book:
The Three Little Pigs of The
Three Billy Goats Gruff (the
latter won)! 1/11/2018

We have left the list up, as we've only just begun discussing, & Kalei added "bees/honey" to it today after the children expressed curiosity through a conversation about morning snack (which included Honey Nut Cheerios). We used the opposite side to vote on a book choice last week, but wanted to try something new today. She wondered how the children might react to an opinion poll,

especially to something that isn't immediately connected to what we've been doing (i.e. stemming from a book, morning play, etc.).

Kalei wrote: **"Which do you prefer, the sun or the moon?"**

Everyone wanted to participate in order to voice their preference, but it seemed there was a general interest in others' opinions. We know that the children are often interested in each other, but it is a huge challenge to maintain that interest when in a large, stimulated group. Their interest is becoming participatory, it's fueled by active listening. It took several minutes for Kalei to collect their preferences, to verify she heard everyone, double-check for accuracy. It didn't feel rushed, however, or overwhelmed by noise. It felt as if everyone was invested in the results & the general opinion of the group...Here are the results of our first opinion poll: sun is preferred 15-9!